

# NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANEA

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## **A New Race of Weaver Bird, *Ploceus intermedius***

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*Ploceus intermedius* ranges from the arid portions of East Africa south through Tanganyika to Natal, and west through southern Northern Rhodesia and northern Bechuanaland to Damaraland and the arid littoral of Angola. Two races are generally recognized : *intermedius* in East Africa south to northern Tanganyika and Ruanda, and *cabanisii* in the remainder of the range. The nominate race is characterized in the breeding male by a moderate wash of chestnut on the hind crown and upper breast ; in *cabanisii* these areas are yellow, only occasionally with a faint wash of chestnut. However, as noted by Chapin (1954, Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. 75B: 339), the population of coastal Angola is the most richly colored of all and must be separated as:

*Ploceus intermedius beattyi* subsp. nov.

Type Chicago Natural History Museum #216656, from Luanda, Angola. Adult male in breeding condition collected 17 Nov. 1952 by H. A. Beatty.

*Diagnosis nearest to intermedius* of East Africa, but in breeding males the chestnut wash on upper breast is darker and extends onto the sides of the lower breast and flanks ; the chestnut of the hind crown is darker and extends onto the nape which is usually yellow in *intermedius*; even the sides of the neck are occasionally washed with chestnut ; differs even more strikingly from the adjoining *cabanisii* in which the chestnut is almost wanting. In females, immatures, and eclipse males, *beattyi* differs from both of these races in being much more richly colored below. In *intermedius* and *cabanisii* the breast is usually yellowish-buff and the

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throat and belly are whitish ; in *beattyi* the breast is a deeper yellowish buff and the throat and belly are pale yellow. There are, however, a few odd specimens of females and eclipse males scattered throughout the range of *cabanisii* that match *beattyi* in this respect. In size *beattyi* averages somewhat smaller than *cabanisii* in wing length, and smaller than *intermedius* in bill length. Comparative measurements are :

		Wing	Gumen
<i>beattyi</i>	♂ ♂	(15) 69-72 (70.4)	(14) 16-18 (17.0)
	♀ ♀	( 5) 64-67 (66.2)	( 5) 15-17 (16.1)
<i>cabanisii</i>	♂ ♂	( 7) 72-76 (74.1)	( 7) 16-18 (16.6)
	♀ ♀	( 2) 70, 70	( 2) 16, 17
<i>intermedius</i>	♂ ♂	(16) 70-75 (72.3)	(16) 17.5-19 (18.0)
	♀ ♀	(12) 66-73 (68.8)	(11) 16-18 (16.9)

*Specimens examined* : *beattyi* 16, 5 from the coast of Angola ; *cabanisii* 7 2 from Damaraland, Bechuanaland, Southern Rhodesia and Transvaal ; *intermedius* 16 12 9 from Kenya and Jubaland.

*Range* the arid coastal zone of Angola, north to Luanda and extending inland along the Cuanza valley at least to Dondo, and south to Benguela. The species has not been recorded from Mossamedes, and a single male from Quillengues in Southern Huambo has, according to Bocage (1881, Orn. Angola: 327) barely a light wash of chestnut on hind crown and breast. This specimen is presumably *cabanisii*.

*Remarks* It is interesting that *beattyi* should more nearly resemble the far distant *intermedius* than the adjoining *cabanisii*. The breeding season in Angola commences in October, and males taken in this month have mostly completed their prenuptial molt. November birds are all in breeding condition, and a juvenal from Dondo was taken in January. A male taken in May has begun its postnuptial molt, and June males are in fresh eclipse plumage.

I would like to thank Dr. Dean Amadon of the American Museum of Natural History for the loan of additional specimens of *cabanisii* and *beattyi*, and Mrs. B. P. Hall of the British Museum for examining the specimens in that institution.

This race is named for Harry A. Beatty, who made several fine collections of West African birds for Chicago Natural History Museum in 1949-52.